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Paradise Valley OKs private-school plan

By JOHN SCHROEDER
The Arizona Republic

The Paradise Valley Town Council on March 10 approved establishment of a private elementary school for about 300 children at the northeast corner of Doubletree Ranch Road and Tatum Boulevard.

Application for a special-use permit for the proposed Tesseract School was filed for a four-acre site that is part of the six-acre Foothills Tennis and Swim Club. The sale of the property to Education Alternatives Inc. of Minneapolis is conditional on approval of the special-use permit. The remaining two acres would retain residential zoning.

The alternative education school would emphasize individual instruction and would be the second of its kind to be developed under its parent company, Control Data Corp., according to Frank Martin, president of Educational Alternatives.

School representatives said the first Tesseract School opened in 1984 in Eagan, Minn.

Children attending the Paradise Valley school would be from 2½ to 6 years old with an estimated 60 of the 300 children being enrolled in preschool programs.

School representative Doug Jordan said neighbors have been contacted and support the project.

The project received unanimous approval March 1 from the town's Planning and Zoning Commission, said councilman-elect Richard Mybeck, a member of the commission.

Martin said the school would have about 30 employees. Normal operating hours would be from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., Jordan said, with most children leaving by 3 p.m.

The council approved the project in a 4-1 vote, with outgoing councilman James Coffee voting against the school. Coffee said he had reservations about several areas including sewer connections, traffic and the location of the parking lot.

"They could have done a lot better design," Coffee said, adding that he is not against the school use for the site.

In its approval, the council required the project be completed by the end of December.

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